

When a Dental Class 3 Soldier Refuses Treatment: Commanders' Options

When a soldier is identified as a Dental Class 3, it means that they have a condition that will probably cause a serious problem within the next 12 months. Here are some examples of the kinds of problems that are likely occur:



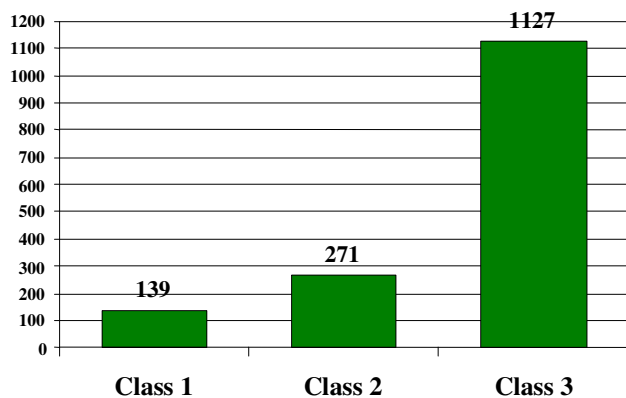
A soldier with a dental infection that drained through the cheek, leaving a permanent scar (Left).



(Right) A soldier whose dental infection has spread to the surrounding face, requiring hospitalization, surgery, and IV antibiotics.

Life-threatening situations can develop, so AR 614-30 states that a soldier who is Dental Class 3 is not deployable until corrective action is completed. Studies have shown that soldiers with a Class 3 dental condition are about 8 times more likely to experience a dental emergency than soldiers who are Class 1.

Army Dental Emergencies per 1,000 per year



From TSCOHS longitudinal study of 1994 recruits

But what if the soldier refuses care?

1. In accordance with AR 600-20 Sec 5-4, a commander may order the examination of any soldier in their command.
2. If the soldier has a Dental Class 3 condition, the installation dental surgeon can refer the soldier to a Medical Review Board (MRB). Commanders should notify their legal counsel that they may need to pursue disciplinary action.
3. Once the MRB has verified that the soldier's refusal is unreasonable, the results are forwarded to HQDA and the Surgeon General (TSG) for approval.
4. Once the approval comes back to the medical treatment facility (MTF) commander, he/she refers the matter to the proper Special Court-

Martial Convening Authority who will order the soldier to submit to treatment.

5. Finally, the commander may take disciplinary action according to UCMJ, and/or administrative action to separate the soldier from service.

Note: At each stage of this process the soldier is given the option to comply with treatment.

Commanders can consult with their assigned dental clinic to learn more about the consequences of Dental Class 3 conditions.

For more information, visit:

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhbw/OralFitnessLeadersPage.aspx>

